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GOLF SHOTS

JAMES SHEPHERD, JR.



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GOLF SHOTS



THE AUTHOR.

Golf Shots

A BOOK FOR BEGINNERS
DESCRIBING AND ILLUSTRATING
THE DIFFERENT STROKES
IN THE GAME

By JAMES SHEPHERD, JR.

HYANNIS, MASS.

1924

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NOTE

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The remarkable development of golf in the United States within the past decade has led to an insistent demand for more instruction in the art of playing. The intention in the preparation of this wee book has been to help meet this demand.

Although a detailed analysis is quite lacking in so far as the strokes proper are concerned, the aim has been to show clearly by photographs some of the more important points which might, in writing, be difficult to elucidate.

In this treatise on the subject applying especially to golf strokes, the aim of the writer has been to present existing knowledge in as simple and straightforward manner as possible. On many problems there is yet need of much critical study, and until this is accomplished, there will continue to be doubt as to the best methods of instruction.

The author desires to express his heartiest thanks to the men who made this work possible, Mr. Thomas F. Tucker (photography) and Mr. Louis M. Boody (emendation).

JAMES SHEPHERD, JR.

MAR 18 1924
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GOLF SHOTS

Before taking up the physical side of the game, with which, for the most part, I am to deal, I wish to instill into the minds of my readers that the mental attitude, as it enters into the game, will show its influence to the extent of being 50 per cent. of any actual stroke. I do not doubt that there are many who will question this possibly rash statement; but let me go on with my reasons.

Hazards on the links, such as bunkers, traps, quarries, mounds and water, all of which go to make up half the game, are tests of mental poise and not of physical skill. The muscles used in the execution of a golf swing are influenced greatly by the mental attitude. Hence the state of mind of the player at the moment of impact determines to a marked degree the success or failure of the shot.

Picture the golfer taking his stance on an elevated tee. A small desert of sand lies one hundred yards out and surrounding the sand are acres

GOLF SHOTS

of beautiful golfing turf; namely, the fairway. The golfer with an incautious glance toward the spot to be avoided, unconsciously retains the picture of the sand in his mind, and with admirable physical reaction lands the drive right in the middle of the waiting hazard. Can you not imagine yourself under similar conditions playing the same shot?

It ought not to call for a great deal of golfing prowess either to carry the sand or to avoid it, but such obstacles as this demand and receive a degree of attention to which they have no right.

Traps are scientifically placed on the courses to catch the golfer who is afraid. Do not heed the trouble awaiting a bad shot but step up to the ball with courage and confidence and select the spot where you would have your ball go. Fix this spot in your mind's eye and the result, after a little practice, will convince you as to the power of concentration in golf.

*SHOTS RESULT FROM MENTAL CONTROL OVER
MUSCULAR EXERTION*

GOLF LESSONS

Every individual of mature years realizes that there is a right and a wrong method in every undertaking, therefore, I say to all of you who would begin playing the game of golf, "Go to a professional and let him start you the right way." He has made a study of the game and has selected it as his life work. He is the one to whom every beginner should go.

Some people go without the assistance and instruction of a professional because of an unconquerable fear of ridicule. Others take up the game in their own way simply because they feel supreme confidence in their ability to master the difficulties alone. Such people as these "hit the ball around" during the first season and experience the sensation, get the thrill, or, as is said in the golf world, are "bitten by the bug." The second season finds them going at it with greater zeal and before long improvement is shown. Next comes the golf talk, and to every one who has the patience to grant audience these world-beaters will pour forth their own exclusive ideas of how the game should be played.



FIG. 1.—VISUALIZING THE SHOT.

GOLF SHOTS

This goes on for but a brief period because the golfer of this class has reached his limit. He, from this point on, is playing the same game from day to day, season to season, and has dropped into the rut with the masses or the universally known "Dub Class."

For the person who is to start golf by taking lessons, the pro will select a set of clubs which will suit as regards length, weight and balance. This alone is worth a great deal. It is customary for the pro to sidestep detail at the first lesson and deal only with fundamentals to avoid confusing the beginner. The grip, the stance and the general swing are first learned, after which comes the more detailed analysis of the different strokes.

The person who takes up the game under instruction will improve as long as he plays golf because he will know nothing but the proper positions and the correct movements. All of these become engrained in the physical and mental make-up of the player while golf lessons are being taken.

Don't be a dub. Play the game so that there will be a satisfying improvement. Take lessons from your local pro. This is the best piece of advice I can give.

GOLF SHOTS



FIG. 2.—NORMAL POSITION OF LEFT HAND.

GOLF SHOTS

THE DRIVE

Do not think that I start with the drive because of its being the most sensational shot in the game, for this is not my reason for doing so. The swing in the drive is that on which all the other swings are built. It is the full, true, and correct golf swing.

THE GRIP

The position of the hands on the club is more important than the majority of beginners think; the main object being to cause them to work in unison. There are two exceptionally good grips employed by a great many golfers; namely, the overlapping and the interlocking. In the first, the little finger of the right hand overlaps the first finger of the left but in the second, these same fingers interlock each other. One can easily see how either of these grips would insure the closeness of the hands so as to make them work together and not against each other. I advocate the interlocking grip for the simple reason that more of the right hand is on the club, a fact which makes it easier for the beginner to combat the so easily acquired slice.

GOLF SHOTS



FIG. 3.—NORMAL POSITION OF LEFT HAND.

GOLF SHOTS

Do not hold the club in the palms of the hands. The fingers should hold the club because they insure a greater delicacy in the control as the swing is made.

The ball of the left thumb should be placed just to the right of the shaft's center, and the ball of the right thumb to the left of the center in such a position that it also touches the first finger of the same hand. When you have your hands in this position you will see there are two V's formed by the thumbs and first fingers of both hands. These V's should point toward the right shoulder.

All of these details are of equal importance,—do not overlook any one of them. Too much stress cannot be laid with regard to the finger grip. The fingers are possessed with a delicacy which does not enter into a palm grip. In order to place a golf ball where you would have it go it is only natural that you should hold your club in the most sensitive part of your hands,—the fingers. There is the control.

GOLF SHOTS



FIG. 4.—NORMAL POSITION OF BOTH HANDS.

GOLF SHOTS



FIG. 5.—NORMAL POSITION OF BOTH HANDS.

GOLF SHOTS



FIG. 6.—NORMAL POSITION OF BOTH HANDS.

GOLF SHOTS

THE STANCE

How far apart should the feet be? This varies according to the person's stature, build, and length of legs. This is a thing, like many others in teaching golf, in which individuality has to be considered and treated accordingly. The feet should



FIG. 7.—NORMAL STANCE.

GOLF SHOTS

be just so far apart that the balance, while the swing is being made, can be easily and comfortably retained.

The line from toe to toe should be parallel with the line of play; *i.e.*, the direction in which the ball should go. Do not become confused when you see professionals and expert amateurs standing with the right foot ahead of this line. This is called the "open stance" and is so taken because all the good players bring their arms and wrists in powerfully, and this shifting of the stance insures the correct effect upon the ball's flight.

The square stance is the one for the beginner as the back swing and follow-through are executed with equal ease. The right foot should be toed out ever so slightly and the left at about a 45-degree angle.

✓ The ball should be opposite the left heel and this is the reason: as the correct golf swing is made, the head of the club travels in almost a perfect circle; if a flawless swing is made it will be found that the lowest point in the circle will come directly opposite the left heel; therefore, it is only right that the ball be teed there. It is at this point

GOLF SHOTS

that the club head attains its maximum velocity in the speed area of a well-timed stroke. With the ball in this position it is much easier for the average player to bring the club head around in time so that the shaft, at the moment of impact, is at right-angles to the line of play. If the stance is taken correctly the line from toe to toe will be at right-angles to the line from the ball to the left heel, and the line of play at right-angles to this.

THE SWING

Nearly every muscle of the body plays a certain part in this. Co-ordination is the first thought, and, with this, success is sure to follow. There is everything graceful in the execution of the proper swing. All critics on the game agree that a good golf swing is a graceful movement. A good drive is the result of good timing, and the timing can be right only when the swing is made in perfect rhythm, and perfect rhythm insures grace of movement.

First of all,—relax. Swing the club back at that speed which gives you the keenest sensation of rhythm and smoothness,—not too quickly, not

GOLF SHOTS

too slowly. Start with the knees slightly bent and as the body twists to the right, the left knee bends a bit more while, contrariwise, the right straightens. Keep the weight equally distributed on both feet during the back swing, but at the same time, to make the body pivot, raise the left heel off the ground a trifle. Many players sway from side to



FIG. 8.—SWINGING BACK.

GOLF SHOTS

side, a habit which inevitably produces a disastrous result. Do not sway,—hold the pivot.

If the amount of weight on each foot is identical, the chances are that the player's head will stay in the center of the correct circle. If, on the other hand, the player's head moves from side to side in the sway, so moves the circle, simply because the head is always at the center.



FIG. 9.—TOP OF SWING FOR DRIVE.



FIG. 10.—TOP OF SWING FOR DRIVE.

GOLF SHOTS

Harry Vardon is quoted as having said, "As the club goes up, so will it come down." We understand from this that if the back swing is right, the club will come down to the ball with a certain amount of surety.



FIG. 11.—THE "FLICK OF THE WRISTS."

GOLF SHOTS

Do not *lift* the club up, but *swing* it, with the wrists and arms. When the club shaft is horizontal at the top of the swing this shows the highest development in a perfect back swing. The shaft should never go past this point, as this would be over-swinging, with the consequent loss of control.



FIG. 12.—HITTING THROUGH THE BALL.

GOLF SHOTS

Bring the club head down to the ball with wrists and arms. More speed can be imparted to the head of the club by the "flick of the wrists" than by exerting the whole body in the swing.

From the time the club leaves the ball in the back swing until the impact, the left arm should remain very nearly straight. Do not forget that this is the arm that guides; if it should bend too much a great deal of the control is lost.

Just after the impact, the weight is transferred to the left foot; the right knee, right hip, and right shoulder turn into the shot, and the right arm goes straight instead of the left as in the back swing. If one hits "through" the ball correctly the right arm will go straight without any effort on the part of the player.

The most difficult thing for beginners to do is, apparently, to retain the bent position from the waist throughout the swing. In the address, the player should bend from the waist toward the ball. At the top of the swing he should bend to the left, looking over the left shoulder at the ball, and in the finish, or follow-through, to the right, toward the place formerly occupied by the ball.



FIG. 13.—FOLLOWING THROUGH.

GOLF SHOTS

The body slides into these positions automatically and with ease as the player pivots. When this is done correctly the center of control, which is the head, remains in the same relative position, this being most essential to the certainty of the hit.

PRESSING

To press is fatal,—not only in the drive, but in every shot. Pressing is an effort on the part of the player to exceed that distance to which the driving force of a well-timed stroke limits him.

There is a certain speed at which each and every golfer must swing to get the best results. I dare say there are many of the stars who swing nearly as hard as their strength allows, but such a play with the beginner would be disastrous. When a man plays in such a way as to develop good form then he is on the right road to hard hitting. The longer a golfer practices, the harder he may hit. The ability to hit hard and still retain control comes on very gradually.

GOLF SHOTS

THE SLICE AND THE HOOK

The slice and the hook are two shots in the game which the beginner has to combat very often. With the professional each of these is an accomplished art, but to the average player these shots are the greatest mysteries, simply because he has acquired them as faults, and is at a loss what to do to rid himself of the terrible things.

To hook and slice at will is a great thing, but when the beginner takes these on and is followed by either one, or both, through his golfing career, it is indeed a serious matter. Of the two, slicing is by far the commoner. It is caused by the hands leading at the moment of impact. Getting the hands ahead in this manner is caused by so many different things that it would be impossible to treat every chronic slicer alike. The fact remains, however, that with the hands leading at the moment of impact, the face of the club is drawn across the line of play, thus causing the ball to spin with the subsequent break to the right as it flies through the air.

With the hook the causes are naturally the direct opposite. Here, the club face, at the impact

GOLF SHOTS

is pushed out, so to speak, causing to be imparted to the ball a spin in the opposite direction. This shot, as a fault, shows itself in the professional's game more than any other, due mostly to hard-hitting and an over-development of wrist action which is just what the average player lacks.

In the effort to gain distance, a great many players will throw the weight and strength into the shot too soon. By this I mean that a player should wait for the head of the club, in order to take advantage of the impetus it has gained in the downward swing, also to insure a perfectly-timed stroke. Time the blow by waiting for the club head. The player's weight is transferred to the left foot just exactly at the moment of impact, not a fraction of a second before. Another common fault I have perceived among novices is the retaining of the weight on the right foot at the impact and thereafter. This is very likely to cause a slice and the consequent loss of distance and direction.

To cure a slice or a hook, I would suggest briefly, twisting the hands to the right for the former and to the left for the latter. This, un-

GOLF SHOTS



FIG. 14.—POSITION OF LEFT HAND TO CORRECT SLICING.

GOLF SHOTS

derstand, is an adjustment of the grip and must be done before the shot is made. Twist the hands as directed and proceed with the shot.

I shall endeavor to illustrate the cause and effect of this: we shall assume that the face of the club is in contact with the ball for, let us say, eight inches. We have reason to believe that the ball and club are together for a certain distance due to the fact that the club must make an impression in the rubber before any rebound will occur, as this is the cause of the ball leaving the face of the club and flying through the air. How the ball will travel, then, depends upon what goes on during contact. If, during the time the club is in contact with the ball, the face should go through on any line other than that which is parallel to the line of play, the ball will, without question, do anything but go straight,—it will have spin imparted to it. If, in slicing, the hands are twisted to the right on the club, the ball will more likely go straight because the hands are then in an uncomfortable position, and in the down swing will strive to turn over again into the original position and in so doing will turn the club face

GOLF SHOTS



FIG. 15.—POSITION OF LEFT HAND TO CORRECT HOOKING.

GOLF SHOTS

straight. In hooking, everything is the reverse. Here, the face of the club is toed in, at the impact of course, and as the player pushes out at this point the ball is caused to spin to the left, and as it flies through the air will naturally curve that way. Now if the hands are twisted to the left on the club the same result will be noticeable as in the slice,—all due to the lack of comfort in the changed position of the hands.

A good drive gives to the golfer an unusual thrill, a thrill which cannot be described, but which every golfer knows and feels, and which, in my belief, constitutes the chief fascination of the game. A good drive gives the golfer confidence to play the hole well,—a sort of inspiration, while a poor drive is most discouraging.

Be content with that distance which your power allows you, bearing in mind that the long hitters need a wider fairway. “The rat with the shortest tail gets in the hole the quickest.”



FIG. 16.—STANCE FOR UPHILL BRASSIE SHOT.

GOLF SHOTS

THE BRASSIE SHOT

Here is a shot that is spoiled many times because of the ball not being teed. The brassie shot is nothing more than a drive; probably a little more difficult, due mostly to the ball having to be played from the ground. This fact should not faze the player.

The brassie is made with more degree of loft to the face than that of the driver and this alone should be sufficient to give the player courage and confidence. Where the ground is level this club is swung just like a driver, and the stance should be taken exactly as one would take it on the tee. There is one condition, however, in playing the brassie, which does not enter into driving, and that is the irregularity of the ground on which the player must stand at times to play this shot. Sometimes there is an uphill stance (Case 1), sometimes a downhill stance (Case 2), while at other times (Case 3) the player must play the ball from a sidehill. In each case the stance should be altered.



FIG. 17.—STANCE FOR DOWNHILL BRASSIE SHOT.

GOLF SHOTS

Case 1. Play the ball off the left toe; in other words, stand further behind the ball. The low point in the circle in an uphill swing, is ahead of that which is in a swing on the level.

Case 2. In playing the ball on a downslope; that is, standing with the left foot lower than the right, the club will come to the ground earlier in the swing; therefore, I suggest standing ahead of the ball in such a manner that the ball will be no closer to one foot than the other. It is more difficult to get the ball into the air from this stance than from any other, and for this reason I advise players to resort to an iron which has more loft to the face. A tendency to retain the weight on the right foot here is fatal with any club.

Case 3. When the ball comes to rest in such a place that it necessitates the player standing above it in order to play the shot, it is well to keep the head down or the ball will likely be topped. Stand with the ball in the same relative position to the left foot as in driving and at the same time retard the right foot a trifle to offset the tendency to slice.

There is another position in which the player will oftentimes find himself, and that is on a side-



FIG. 18.—STANCE ABOVE BALL.

GOLF SHOTS

hill, when the ball comes to rest in such a place that the player's feet are below the level of the ball. This is just the opposite condition from that I have just described. It is reasonable, then, to employ the opposite method in playing the shot. The ball is liable to be hooked from this position if the right foot is not advanced.

The brassie is a very handy implement among those so-called "short-hitters," as it is fully as powerful a club as the driver. The best practice I know of, for the golfer who may be unsteady with this club, is to use it from the teeing-ground, using little or no sand. By doing this, more confidence is gained for the long shots through the fairway. Short-hitters should spend a great deal of time on the brassie shot in practicing because they will be called upon many times to use this club against a powerful mid-iron shot, played by their long-hitting brothers. It is an understood fact that a ball is placed more accurately with an iron than with wood, and for this reason the long-hitters have the advantage over those folks who do not get the distance. From this will be understood my reason for urging practice.



FIG. 19.—STANCE BELOW BALL.

GOLF SHOTS

One of the greatest mistakes made among golfers is underclubbing, *i.e.*, the use of a club with insufficient power for the requisite distance. It should be remembered that there is a club for every distance. Take a club that has enough power in it to drive the ball over the green, in preference to one which is incapable of even reaching the green. When a player chooses the latter, pressing is encouraged and this causes a faulty stroke. When in doubt about a mid-iron playing the desired distance, do not hesitate to call upon the brassie, for this will give to you the necessary yardage with no effort in the swing.

Play the brassie whenever the distance calls for it,—do not underclub.

THE MID-IRON

In competitions where the contestants are allowed but one club, it will be noticed that practically the whole field uses the mid-iron. It is the “confidence club.” Put this implement in the hands of a person taking his first lesson and he



FIG. 20.—NORMAL STANCE FOR MID-IRON.

GOLF SHOTS

will hit the ball fairly, six times to every one time with any other club in the bag. It is a sort of "in-between" club. It is of average length, average loft, and is designed to play the average distance.

Boy caddies, who in most instances have not the means to outfit themselves with the full set, get their start with the mid-iron. Later in life these lads become leading professionals.

There are two thoughts which enter the mind of the player as he is about to play a shot; first, the distance the ball must travel, and second, the proper club to use. Choose the mid-iron when the distance is not great enough for the brassie, also when the lie is unsuitable. With the majority, the lie seems to be the first consideration, and I think that this is a great mistake. When the ball leaves the fairway the average golfer draws mechanically from his bag the mashie, or niblick, or some other club with pronounced extricating powers. This is usually done without thought, the player just saying to himself, "Heavens, I'm in trouble now; I must get out!" So, with a certain

GOLF SHOTS

amount of fear and doubt, he smashes into the ground and ball, when in most instances there are but a few spears of long grass around the ball.

Think of the distance your ball must cover. Then, if the lie should be so impossible as to prohibit the use of a club which would get you there, choose the nearest thing to it. The mid-iron can be used many times in the rough where some players will choose a mashie or mashie-niblick, with the consequent loss of valuable distance.

The execution of an iron shot differs from that of a shot with a wooden club. In the first place, the iron has a shorter shaft; this necessitates the player standing closer to the ball. He also must stoop more, *i.e.*, bend from the waist. In standing closer to the ball, the circle, which the club head describes in the swing, is made more upright. This means that the stance must be shifted. With the wooden clubs, as I have already mentioned, the ball should be opposite the left heel,—but, with the mid-iron the player should stand further ahead of the ball, that is to say, with the ball opposite a point not quite midway between the feet. Advance the right foot.

GOLF SHOTS

The more upright the swing is, the more chance there is of hoisting the ball up into the air thus wasting in acquiring altitude the force which should give yardage. For this reason I emphasize the point of standing a bit ahead of the ball with the irons. When such a stance is taken the ball is hit with a descending blow and therefore will shoot along on a low trajectory. One attains greater distance with the mid-iron by executing the shot in this manner. I may also add that the ball is less subjected to the high winds which give battle to all of us in our effort to keep the little sphere in the right direction.

In playing the mid-iron the player should maintain a certain amount of rigidity, although it must be ever so slight. This is, of course, unthinkable when playing the wooden clubs. To make this clear, we shall assume that the mid-iron was chosen for a shot because the distance was not great enough for the brassie and too great for the mashie, the lie not being considered. In this case the golfer has two things in mind; the distance and the direction. He must control his ball so that not only will it go straight, but also will



FIG. 21.—“LEANING INTO THE SHOT IS HELPFUL.”

GOLF SHOTS

neither go too far nor fall short. With this slight rigidity of which I speak there will be a more certain control. Simply grip the club a wee bit firmer in the fingers and be conscious of a straight left arm; hold the body steady as you swing, cut down on the wrist action and hit "through" the ball with a crisp, deliberate punch. In the back swing, the club shaft will not reach the horizontal (and in the mid-iron stroke should not) if the wrist action is made less.

Leaning into the shot is helpful. This will aid the player in his effort to "hit down on the ball." The great majority of professionals do this; the great majority of amateurs "hit up on the ball." If, at the moment of impact, the club head is descending, the ball will more likely travel low and straight. If, on the other hand, the ball is hit on the up swing the effect will be the reverse.

GOLF SHOTS

When the would-be golfer learns to “hit down on the ball” with the irons, there will be less topping, fewer lost balls and, above all, the score card will be more attractive.



FIG. 22.—“HITTING DOWN ON THE BALL.”

GOLF SHOTS

THE MASHIE

“How I dread this club!” exclaimed one of my pupils, as she drew from her bag the mashie. I have reason to believe that the sentiments of the



FIG. 23.—MID-IRON SHOT—HALF WAY THROUGH.

GOLF SHOTS

masses were voiced in this exclamation. The manner in which the beginner goes about playing a shot with the mashie is indeed sufficient cause for an onlooker to believe that this implement must be something to fear. It would seem also that treachery lurked therein as we listen to some golfers tell of the actions of the ball after it has been hit with this club. There are very few players, outside of the pro and expert amateur ranks, who handle the mashie with any apparent skill. The knowledge of the fact that the ball must be placed within a limited area is in itself disconcerting to the beginner, and is primarily the cause of his lack of skill.

Assuming that the mashie is being used for a pitch to the green, which is partly surrounded by traps and hazards of various descriptions, the player will be harassed by the fear of a probably disastrous result. This is why the majority hold this really wonderful club in such great repugnance. It is not the club; it is the shot they are called upon to play with the club.

Let the beginner hit the ball down the fairway without thought of placement, and shot after shot

GOLF SHOTS

will sail away beautifully, but to station the player 75 to 100 yards from the green, with a dozen balls to play, and ask him to drop these balls thereon with the mashie would be an entirely different proposition. The player's mind is then in a state of confusion.

There are really two stages through which one passes in learning the mashie shot; first, to hit the ball in the correct manner, and second, to land the ball consistently well in a designated area. The last cannot be done without a good knowledge of the first.

When a mashie shot is properly played there will be very little roll to the ball after it lands. It should carry to the green and stay there. To impart backspin to the ball is the surest way to make it stay "put." When a ball will do this it has been properly hit. What goes on at the point of impact determines whether or not the ball will have the desired spin. As the head of the club descends to the ball, the first contact should be made with the bottom edge of the blade at a point on the ball just below its center. From this point the blade should continue downward but at the

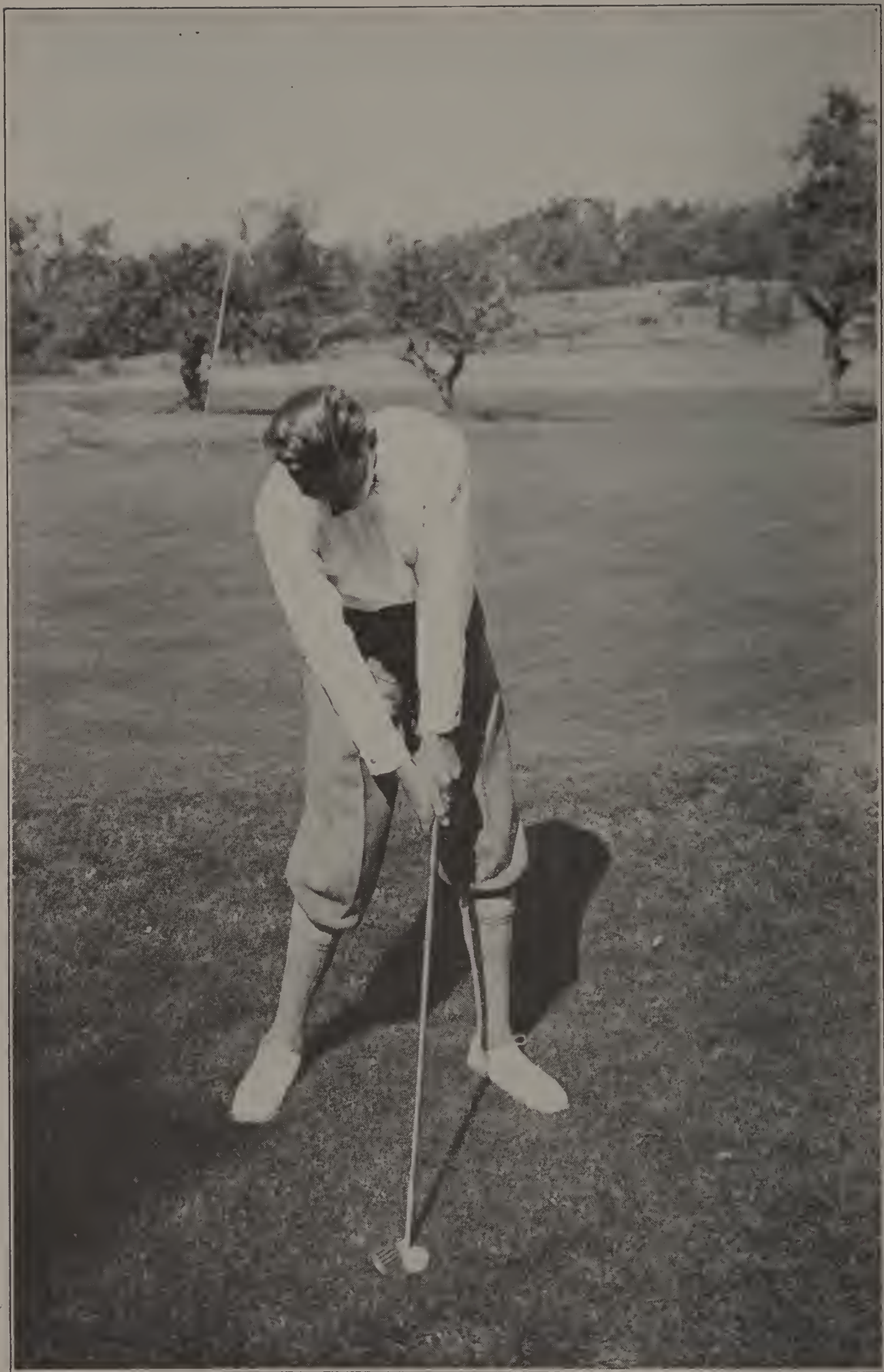


FIG. 24.—NORMAL STANCE FOR MASHIE.

GOLF SHOTS

same time forward in the line of play. The blade will now have reached the turf and the ball leaves the face of the club with a tremendous backspin. It will be understood from this that the ball is hit first; after which the club takes the turf. (Replace the divot.) The ball will, upon hitting the green, "bite" and stay.



FIG. 25.—EXTREME TOP OF MASHIE SWING.

GOLF SHOTS

The feet should be closer together in this stroke, with the right foot well advanced. The player must be able to determine the necessary strength by fixing in his mind's eye the exact distance and direction while the "preliminary waggle" is being made. He will swing his club back only to that



FIG. 26.—HITTING DOWN AND THROUGH.

GOLF SHOTS

point necessary to give sufficient impetus to send the ball the required distance. During the back swing the wrists should not twist so much as to cause the club shaft and the left arm to form an acute angle at the top of the swing. Swing to that point where a perfect right-angle will be formed. The arms should be swung in, around, and close to the body, while the right elbow works close to the right hip. Keep the left arm as straight as possible until after the impact. The face of the club should be turned open in the back swing by twisting the wrists to the right. This is done so that the player will secure the full benefit of the loft of the blade.

Pull the blade down into the ball with the left hand. Do not feel the right hand working until the moment of impact and thereafter. Above all, do not stop at the ball, but hit right through courageously, allowing the head of the mashie to travel on after the ball in a straight line close to the ground.

The closer one is to the green the more he should "choke" the club. That is to say: one

GOLF SHOTS

should take his grip farther down on the shaft because not so much leverage is needed, and better control will be felt. For a shorter stroke, the stance should be taken closer to the ball and with the feet closer together. Always "hit down on the ball" with the mashie; the blow should be a descending one.



FIG. 27.—FINISH OF MASHIE SWING.

GOLF SHOTS

It would be impossible to ascertain how fast a ball must spin for it to come to rest at the spot on which it lands, but it is needless to say, that the speed at which the club goes down and through determines the velocity and backspin of the ball. The amount of resistance which the putting-green surface may have to offer has a great deal to do with the ball "sticking." In the summer, when the greens are hard and dry, it is naturally more difficult to keep the ball from running off, and under such conditions the backspin shot will be found wonderfully effective.

Sometimes it is easier to cause a ball to stop by imparting a diagonal spin to it. This is done when the face of the club is drawn diagonally across the line of play during contact, but, as in the other method, the blade is descending all the while. With this shot, the ball after landing, will jump to the right and stop. The stroke is best made when the face of the club is pulled down and across the line of play with the *left hand*. "Shanking" is a very common fault in this shot. This is caused when the socket of the iron

GOLF SHOTS

hits the ball, causing it to shoot off at almost a right-angle. It is the most miserable shot in golf. I should advise beginners to hit down through the ball in the natural manner in preference to this latter type of mashie play.

Practice and confidence will win out, but without the courage to hit down with a deliberate punch there will be but a trifling reward for the novice. Do not try to scoop the ball into the air by tilting back with the body as the club goes through. Let the club down to its work,—it will play its part beautifully if you will but give it a chance. Remember that the mashie is built to make the ball rise into the air quickly, so why not let it do the work by hitting down instead of trying to lift it yourself?

Alex Smith, the well-known professional of the old school, in describing a good mashie shot to someone, said, “Tak’ a bit o’ turf and drop the ba’ on the green like a fried egg.” So, if you would have the ball stop on the green after landing, “take the feet from the ball.”

A great many of the novice class will hold to the mashie until the ball finally stops on the

GOLF SHOTS

green. For these I have a suggestion to offer which, if carried out, will be of great value to some if not all. It is agreed that a ball is placed more easily when it is rolled than when it is pitched, first, because there is more chance of hitting it accurately, *i.e.*, less chance of a "flub," and second, because when the intervening ground is unobstructed and true, it is the easier of the two shots. If the ball is but a few yards from the edge of the green, and there is nothing to pitch over, such as a bank, a trap or long grass, why not run the ball up? Without a doubt this is much easier to do. The game itself is difficult enough so why not make it easy when the opportunity presents itself? To run a ball up, a club with a straight face should be used; anything between a mid-iron and a putter.

There are times of course when such obstacles as I have mentioned above make it necessary for the player to pitch the ball; in which case it is wise to choose a club with more degree of loft than that of the mashie, especially if the green be close at hand. Modern golf course architecture calls for many hazards about the greens; so that,



FIG. 28.—POSITION FOR THE RUN-UP SHOT.

GOLF SHOTS

when a player's ball lies in such a place that it necessitates his playing the ball over one of these hazards, the only club to use is that which will cause the ball to rise abruptly into the air and also come down at an abrupt angle. Choose the niblick for this, and with the blade well turned out, cut through below the ball after the manner of the regular mashie shot but, of course, with less swing. This will cause the ball to backspin and so make it less liable to run across the green and into trouble on the other side.

To those who have acquired the knack of back-spinning a ball there is little left to learn in mashie play. There are scores of devotees of the game who can make the ball rise into the air as they approach the green, but in most instances the ball has not the required "bite," which fact causes the then dismayed golfer to call for his niblick instead of his putter.

Considering the severity of the natural and man-made hazards around the greens of today, the player who has not the backspin shot in his bag will be continually piling up unnecessary strokes on his card.



FIG. 29.—PITCHING OVER OBSTACLE NEAR GREEN.



FIG. 30.—PITCHING OVER OBSTACLE NEAR GREEN.

GOLF SHOTS

THE BUNKER SHOT

There are a number of different kinds of bunker shots, so that it is impossible to lay down any one hard and fast rule or method governing this play. Bunkers and traps will confront the golfer all the way from tee to green, generally speaking, and as these vary greatly as to depth, size and shape, it is not likely that the player will find the conditions twice alike.

First of all, the golfing public must get away from the thought that a niblick must always be called upon to get the ball out of these places. Many a championship has been clinched at the critical moment by the use of a brassie, spoon or mid-iron from the sand. Sometimes a putter is a most effective club in a sand trap.

As I have suggested in a preceding chapter, the distance to cover should be the first thought, and the lie, or the conditions under which the player must negotiate the shot, the second thought. If the green cannot possibly be reached choose the club that will get the ball out and give it the great-

GOLF SHOTS

est distance. Usually around the green will be found the traps with greatest depth and steepest banks; so the club with the most loft should be used in these. When the ball is lying in the middle of a wide, shallow trap, with the green a good distance away, it will be very much easier for the player to recover with a mid-iron than with a niblick. His ball will come to rest farther down the fairway, in all probability within reach of the green; whereas, if the other club had been used he would have succeeded in getting out only. There is another point to this: There is more doubt, fear and general confusion in the mind of the player when he takes the niblick, because he knows this club was built to get the ball out of trouble, and this fact alone has caused many to stay right in that "trouble" until two, three, and sometimes four strokes have been wasted in the attempt to recover.

When the bank of the trap is not high, take the club that will get the ball "there" and forget all about conditions and objects around you. When the bank *is* high and the ball is close up to it, with



FIG. 31—POSITION FOR EXPLOSION SHOT.

GOLF SHOTS

the green close at hand I would suggest the use of a club with great loft. Play the ball off the right foot, with the left well retarded; turn the blade out, swing hard, coming down across the line of play. At the moment of impact the hands should be leading. In playing this shot the club should enter the sand about two inches behind



FIG. 22.—EXPLOSION (NOTE BALL IN AIR).

GOLF SHOTS

the ball and then cut through below it. The explosion of sand is what gets the ball up and out. The ball rises sluggishly and lands "lifeless." If the ball lands on the green the player may rest assured it will stay there when this type of shot is played, because there will be no roll.



FIG. 33.—POSITION FOR LONG SHOT FROM SHALLOW TRAP.

GOLF SHOTS

When the trap is shallow and much distance is needed the ball should be hit as cleanly as possible. The mode of play here is much different from that which I have just described,—the ball is hit



FIG. 34.—TOP OF SWING FOR LONG SHOT FROM SHALLOW TRAP.

GOLF SHOTS

before the sand. If the use of a mashie is required to get the ball out and on its way, simply play it as a regular mashie shot from the turf, hitting down through the ball into the sand. Play



FIG. 35.—HIT THE BALL BEFORE THE SAND.

GOLF SHOTS

a mid-iron just as it should be played from the fairway, taking care not to hit the sand behind the ball.

As I have said, sometimes a brassie or spoon may be used successfully from the sand in a shallow bunker. In this case, it is best to get the ball off by hitting little or no sand at all. If the ball happens to be in a foot print or other depression, it is, of course, wise to use a club with considerable loft to the face. When this sort of lie is encountered the ball and sand should be struck simultaneously. It is best to stand closer to the ball, as this tends to make the swing more upright, causing the club head to descend to the ball on a sharper angle and so lessens the chances of hitting behind it.

If, in playing a long shot from a sand trap, the player hits behind the ball, the shot is spoiled. The reader will readily understand that if the speed and control of the club is spent in the sand behind the ball, the attempt is fruitless. By the time the club gets through to the ball, there will not be sufficient power to give it distance.



FIG. 36.—POSITION FOR PUTTING.

GOLF SHOTS

Let there be no misunderstanding in regard to these two kinds of bunker shots. In the one, the attempt should be to cause the ball to rise quickly into the air and drop "dead." This is when the trap is deep and the bank high, with the green close at hand. In the other, the trap is shallow and much distance is needed; so the attempt here should be to cause the ball to travel along a low trajectory and gain as much yardage as possible.

Sand in bunkers offers a very unstable foothold due to its loose, shifting nature. It is well for the player to make his stance secure by twisting his feet back and forth, thereby allowing them to settle. An infirm stance has caused many distressing shots.

PUTTING

I can safely say that the deciding stroke in the great majority of golf matches has been played on the green. Here is the place where the game is won and lost. Let there be no alibis here, for luck enters not into this department of the game,

GOLF SHOTS

Women are on a par with men at this; strength and power play no part in putting. The state of equality, however, rests here alone, because women are not gifted naturally with the muscular ability to hit hard as are men.

Although I wish to be absolutely impartial I cannot refrain from stating that, in my experience, I have found women to be possessed with a certain precision of *touch* the absence of which is so unmistakably evident in man's initial trial at the game.

Touch is the word, for without this, half the battle is lost, whether it be with a driver or putter, mid-iron or mashie.

Touch is of paramount importance in putting. When this is wanting the player is without confidence, courage and control. Without the feeling of *touch* the player putts blindly, hoping and praying all the while that some unforeseen influence will guide his ball truly on its way and into the hole. This kind of playing takes the joy out of the game and the heart out of the golfer.

Right here I should like to describe *touch* as I have conceived it in putting. It is the faculty of

GOLF SHOTS

feeling the resistance of the putter head as it swings toward and “through the ball.” Having this the player can, with a great amount of surety, estimate the length of back swing which the distance and “speed” of the green calls for. I can best describe the effect of feeling the putter head’s resistance by comparing the hit to that feeling of solidity in a satisfying drive. Every golfer should know or has experienced this. The absence of this *solid* feeling assures the player of the non-existence of *touch* in his stroke. Every player can acquire this faculty and I dare say most players have felt the brief possession of it at some time or other. Those who have experienced it for a day only to lose it overnight are in the majority. This is not to be wondered at, for the same thing may happen in regard to any and every shot in the game.

Touch is lost at the top of the swing. When the stroke is started with a jerk, or with too much speed, or force, rhythm is lost and with it goes *touch*, for without rhythm, *touch* will never be felt. To play safe on this, my advice is to allow

GOLF SHOTS

the down swing to start itself. Do not hasten the stroke. Hit the ball firmly, but do not force the swing. The wrist action will be automatic as the amount of force will have been predetermined by the player's judgment of the distance and the length of back swing.

There are three fundamentals in putting and they are: position, judgment and touch. I have chosen to describe the last first, because of its importance in all golf shots.

There are many things in putting to test the judgment of a player. There is, (1) the distance, (2) the direction, (3) the speed of the green, and (4) the contour of the surface; this last offering a great variety of tricky paths over which the ball must travel.

(1) An improvement of the player's judgment of distance is gained in practice alone. Do not fall short of the hole, but bear in mind the time worn axiom, "Never up, never in." It is better to putt two feet past than six inches short, as the ball will be given the chance of dropping in.

(2) Direction is usually bad when a putt is hurried. It is an excellent plan to sight the line

GOLF SHOTS

of play from behind the ball before the stroke is made. In addressing the ball, look well to the hole; once, twice,—yes, three times, as this is what determines the right-angle at which the blade must be turned in relation to the line which the ball must be started on. In short, look at the line and then at the putter blade in repeated succession.

(3) A fast or slippery green calls for more precision of touch than does a slow one. With the former it is better to allow the green to take the ball instead of hitting deliberately for the cup. Control of direction must be firmly centered in the touch at the impact. If a fast green is true, much pleasure may be derived from putting thereon. The player knows well that success or failure rests with him and not with the lucky or unlucky “kicks,” which the ball may receive. Putting on a slow surface is different entirely; my suggestion here being to hit firmly and deliberately for the back of the cup.

(4) When a sidehill putt confronts the golfer, he should make sufficient allowance for the slope so that the ball will come to the hole from the high side. Four out of five sidehill putts roll

GOLF SHOTS

down before the hole has been reached. Do not be afraid to hit the ball well up the hill as there is a greater chance of its falling into the hole from the high edge than from the low edge. It will be noticed that the ball will stop much closer to the hole if this suggestion be carried out.



FIG. 37.—SWING BACK WITH THE WRISTS.

GOLF SHOTS

There are a great many different putting styles. What suits one, may not suit another; what feels comfortable to one, feels oftentimes uncomfortable to the other. The position for putting is of little importance, only that the player must refrain from forcing himself into an unnatural one. Adopt a putting style wherein you feel perfectly poised and comfortable, and do not change.

Certain fundamentals will be found common to the styles employed by all professionals in putting, but all have their individual peculiarities. These fundamentals are: The head over the ball, most of the weight on the left foot, with the ball opposite, and inclining the putter shaft a little to the left, thus causing a descending blow.

When one *hits down* in putting, the ball holds to the green better, and is therefore less liable to be "kicked" off the line. Putt with the wrists and fingers, keeping the arms and body out of the stroke, bearing in mind that precision of touch counts more than anything else.

GOLF SHOTS



FIG. 38.—A FIRM HIT.

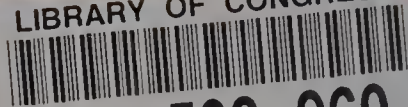
GOLF SHOTS

PUTTING RULES

1. Be confident. "You know it's going in."
2. Be calm in that moment of keen agony. "You're a better putter than he."
3. Shoot for the back of the cup. "Never up, never in."
4. Don't throw your putter. "It might break."
5. Hole them all,—concede none. "Be honest with yourself."
6. Be cheerful when you miss. "Golf is a revealer of character."

*GOLF, UNLIKE MOST GAMES, MAY BE PLAYED AND
ENJOYED BY 'ALL AGES*

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